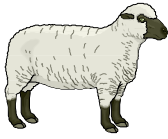




FACT SHEET

California Department of Food and Agriculture



Management of Sheep in the Voluntary Scrapie Flock Certification Program at California Fairs - March 1998 -



The Voluntary Scrapie Flock Certification Program (VSFCP) is designed to identify flocks that have not shown signs of scrapie and have no known exposure to scrapie over specific periods of time. There are two main forces driving participation in the program; 1) identify flocks that are monitored for absence of scrapie, and 2) maintain a safe monitored source of lamb.

The long incubation period from the time of scrapie transmission to development of disease (2-5 years), and the absence of a live animal test to detect scrapie infected sheep, complicates control of the disease. The VSFCP provides the tools (lifelong animal identification and records) needed to trace the parents and progeny of an infected sheep.

There has been increased awareness and consumer concern regarding spongiform encephalopathies in animals since the bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) outbreak in Great Britain. It is expected in the immediate future that participation in the VSFCP will be required to market to slaughter. If surveillance is not done in American sheep, the packers may purchase sheep from New Zealand or Australia, which are recognized to be free of scrapie. Fair managers are developing procedures to assist enrolled flocks with maintaining their certification status.

- ▶ It is very important that each animal in the VSFCP retain its identification. Sheep that enter the fairgrounds with official eartags should keep those eartags in their ears. Identification is expected to be required to market to slaughter.
- ▶ Scrapie-enrolled flocks should be separated from non-enrolled flocks during transportation to the fair and while at the fairgrounds. This can be done by using a vacant pen or hay and tack pen, an alleyway or a solid barrier between enrolled and non-enrolled animals. There is negligible risk of scrapie transmission with limited contact between enrolled and non-enrolled sheep sharing the show ring. If possible, the "get ready" pens next to the show ring should be designated "enrolled" and "non-enrolled" to minimize risk of transmission.
- ▶ Lambing of affected ewes increases the potential of scrapie transmission. Therefore, extra precautions should be taken to prevent the contact of sheep with lambing or aborting ewes.

For additional information call:

Animal Health Branch

Headquarters:	(916) 654-1447
Redding District:	(530) 225-2140
Modesto District:	(209) 491-9350
Fresno District:	(559) 237-1843
Ontario District:	(909) 947-4462
USDA/APHIS VS	(916) 857-6170

Or visit website at:

www.cdfa.ca.gov/animal/animal_health/index.html
www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/scrapie/status.html